

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND EQUITY  
AND EQUITY FRAMEWORK**

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**Vision and Purpose of Family Engagement and Equity**

The Clarke County School District has developed a Family Engagement and Equity framework to:

- 1) encourage, support and secure an effective partnership and increased involvement among families, schools, and the community in the education of our children; continue to seek additional and innovative ways to promote family engagement.
- 2) promote high student achievement by creating school cultures that value and respect all participants-students, parents, staff, and administrators.
- 3) comply with the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* Title I requirements regarding the establishment of a parent involvement policy (20 USC 6183).

This framework is based on the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement and the research of Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University.

**I. Definitions**

**Parent** – Any legal guardian who plays an important role in a child’s upbringing and well-being

**Family** – We define family as a group of two or more individuals related by blood, birth, marriage, adoption, guardianship, or other emotional tie.

We use the word parent and family in this policy to refer to all individuals who carry the primary responsibility for a child’s education and development.

**Family Engagement and Equity** –the participation of parents and families in every facet of children’s education and development from birth to adulthood, recognizing that parents and families are the primary influence in children’s lives.

**District-Level Family Engagement and Equity Action Team (FEAT)** – The FEAT is made up of Family Engagement and Equity Specialists from many CCSD schools, parents, district-level administrators, and community members. The goal of this group is to build the capacity of CCSD staff to engage families through increased support and collaboration.

**School-Level Family Engagement and Equity Team (SFEAT)** – The SFEAT can be made up of parents, administrators, teachers, staff, Family Engagement and Equity and Equity specialists, community members, and when possible students. Local School Council, PTSO/PTA/PTO or other advisory group can serve as the SFEAT. The goal of this group is to use the district Family Engagement and Equity policy as a guide in their development of a site-based Family

Engagement and Equity program that is goal-oriented and linked to the School Improvement Framework.

**School Improvement Framework (SIF)** – The SIF is a comprehensive school three-year continuous improvement plan that meets the NCLB requirements for Title I and non-Title I funded schools.

## **II. General Expectations of the Family Engagement and Equity Framework**

The CCSD FE framework is designed to assist staff, parents and community in preparing all students for the future: for work, further education and training, and family and civic responsibilities. Current parent involvement literature suggests that when parents are involved in their students' education, those students have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently regardless of their socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level. Family Engagement and Equity activities must be well-planned, comprehensive, and regularly evaluated at all grade levels. This framework represents input from families and the community and will be made available annually to all parents of CCSD children. This policy shall also be incorporated into the LEA Title I, Part A plan.

The CCSD believes that Family Engagement and Equity is important to the establishment of an educational environment that encourages high student achievement. As Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions on the Pyramid of Intervention, family engagement strategies proactively engage families as positive partners in ensuring student success. Parents of CCSD students have a unique opportunity for Family Engagement and Equity through active participation in and support of School Councils and other site-based family activities. The school district will incorporate this Family Engagement and Equity framework into its LEA plan developed under section 1112 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Recognizing that the most meaningful Family Engagement and Equity occurs at the school level, this CCSD district framework shall provide the following expectations for the development of School Improvement Frameworks (SIF).

- Each school will include families and community in the development of Family Engagement and Equity activities which will be included in the school improvement framework.
- Activities offered at the school will be planned and operated in meaningful consultation with parents and will be held at a variety of times and locations (section 1118).
- Communication will be provided in a simple and clear format. All explanations of educational terms used by teachers and other school personnel will be explained in a parent-friendly manner. A variety of formats, both face-to-face and written, will be used. Electronic notifications, such as phone tree systems and the Parent Portal, will also be used by schools in order to improve communication with families about student attendance and student grades.
- When schools are built or remodeled, efforts will be made to include family engagement centers.

- The CCSO will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable format and in a language parents understand or other alternative formats. Schools will use interpreters at all school functions, when a significant proportion of non-English speaking parents are representative.
- The SIF will be the mechanism for carrying out each of the requirements found in this Family Engagement and Equity policy. These SIFs will be evaluated and updated annually.
- The Clarke County School District will utilize the existing district-wide Parent Advisory Board (PAB) to provide advice on general matters related to Family Engagement and Equity.
- The concepts in this District-Wide Family Engagement and Equity Framework have been developed jointly with, and agreed on by, parents of children attending Clarke County Schools.

### **III. Family Engagement and Equity Components of the SIFs**

Family Engagement and Equity activities within the SIF should support the following components, as appropriate:

Component 1 – Student /Family Learning-Education is student and parent centered and inclusive of the voices and experiences of our students/families.

Component 2 – Communication - Communication between home and school is open, frequent, meaningful, and conducted in multiple ways.

Component 3 – Parenting - Parenting skills are promoted and supported.

Component 4 – Positive and Equitable School Culture - School cultures are open, helpful and inviting.

Component 5 – Parent Decision Making / Advocacy - Parents are encouraged to provide advice, make recommendations and provide assistance in school decisions and advocacy that affect children and families.

Component 6 – Collaborating with the Community – The school addresses student, family, and community needs through appropriate services and cross-institutional partnerships.

Component 7 – Equity in Human Resources – Our schools value the diversity of our families by utilizing the life experiences and community memberships of children, family and staff to support individual student growth and overall school goals.

#### **A. Implementation Activities**

##### **1. School Family Engagement and Equity Activities to Increase Student Achievement**

CCSO will continue to provide the necessary coordination, technical assistance and other support to assist schools in the planning and implementation of effective Family Engagement and Equity activities to improve student achievement and school performance by helping schools to complete:

- An inventory and assessment of present practice and current family needs based on the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs
- Action steps to strengthen practices and meet family needs
- Annual evaluation of school goals to continually improve family engagement efforts.

## **2. Building Capacity for Family Engagement and Equity**

CCSD will continue its current efforts to build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong Family Engagement and Equity, in order to improve student achievement, through the following activities:

Fostering Family Engagement and Equity by aligning the Family Engagement and Equity program with NCLB requirements and by strongly linking the program to student achievement by providing assistance, materials, training, and learning opportunities, as needed, to parents in such areas as:

- The Georgia Performance Standards;
- How to access CCSD curriculum and provide feedback on the curriculum, instruction, or assessment;
- Strategies for parents to monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children;
- NCLB and Adequate Yearly Progress;
- Child advocacy, especially in the areas of special education and ESOL;
- School improvement and corrective action process, if applicable,
- Requirements of Title I, Part A, if applicable;
- State and local assessments;
- Promotion and retention policies;
- After-hour programming and specialized programs for children currently being offered in the district;
- Adult education/Literacy classes offered by CCSD and other local organizations (Title I, Part A funds can be used for this purpose if all other sources have been exhausted);
- Referrals to community resources and social services;
- Ways to help families establish home environments that support children as students;
- Information and ideas for families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum and assessment related activities, decisions, and planning;
- How to design effective methods of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children progress;
- Ways in which parents can participate in decisions related to the education of their children; and
- Training parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.

## **3. Professional Learning for CCSD Staff**

Professional learning will be provided to school personnel on how to reach out to, communicate and work with parents as full and equal partners and how to implement and coordinate parent and community partnership programs, in order to build ties between parents, schools, and

community. These activities will be specified in the school's SIF. Activities that meet this need and can be included in the SIF are: conferences, workshops and publications.

#### **4. Community Partnerships**

The CCSD will encourage each school, through its Partners in Education Program (school-business partners), to provide information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work together with parents and schools. Each SIF should support the development of appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in school and Family Engagement and Equity activities.

#### **5. Title I Family Engagement and Equity Requirements**

##### *A. Reservation of Funds for Family Engagement and Equity Activities for Title I funded schools*

The Clarke County School District shall annually reserve one percent of its Title I allocation for Family Engagement and Equity activities, including promoting family literacy and parenting skills. Ninety-five percent of this reserve will be allocated to the participating schools on an equal basis to be used for school-level Family Engagement and Equity activities specified in the school's plan. These funds will be in addition to any other funds the schools may choose to allocate to Family Engagement and Equity activities. Schools will be required to involve parents in the decision regarding how these funds are allotted for these activities at the school level.

##### *B. Coordination with other Family Engagement and Equity Programs and Activities for Title I funded schools*

The Clarke County School District will coordinate and integrate Family Engagement and Equity strategies under Title I with Family Engagement and Equity strategies under other programs, such as NCLB program, Even Start, adult education, Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers Program, Reading First, Early Reading First, migrant education, homeless education, bilingual programs, Family Literacy and Resource Centers, and the state lottery-funded pre-kindergarten program. The focus of this coordination will be at the school level through the school's Family Engagement and Equity policy/plan.

##### *C. Annual Meeting for Title I funded schools*

District staff in the Office of Student Achievement and Educational Equity will participate in each school's Annual Meeting. During this annual meeting, parents will be informed of the following:

- the Title I Program and its purpose,
- the requirements of Title I,
- the parents' rights to be involved in decisions made about their children's education in the school, and
- the school's improvement status in the district and the district's ranking in the state (if available).

A description of the proficiency levels of the assessments used to determine achievement of the state's content standards (CRCT) and what each of these levels means (Does not meet standards, Meets standards, Exceeds standards), will be provided when the content standards are described and explained in both written format and parent meetings. An explanation of the CCSD

assessments will also be provided at this same time in such a way that parents will understand the importance of these assessments and how they can know if their children are mastering the content standards.

During the school's Annual Meeting, parents will be provided with a description of the specific instructional programs that are offered in the school in both reading/language arts and mathematics to enable all students to meet the state's content standards. Parents will be offered opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children. Parents will be provided an adequate response to all questions regarding the content standards, performance standards, or instructional programs offered in the schools as soon as practicably possible.

*D. Provision of Materials and Training for Parents for Title I funded schools*

Annually, each school will be required to develop a specific plan to assist parents in working with their children to improve academic achievement. This plan will be developed with meaningful parental input and appropriate strategies will be included as a part of the school's school improvement framework. This plan may include any or all of the following:

- providing assistance to parents on ways to monitor and support student progress at home,
- materials available to parents for parent checkout in school parenting areas to assist with strategies to work with children at home,
- information regarding conferences, workshops/classes/course, books, family literacy materials, instructional packets, internet resources, computer equipment, and leveled books for parent check-out,
- training sessions to assist parents with ways to help their children do better in school,
- names of resource persons and programs in the community to utilize to help give their children additional academic support,
- Adult Education Programs to assist parents in learning English or prepare to take the GED, family literacy programs, and other resource persons and programs,
- build parent capacity for school involvement;
- Family Engagement and Equity workshops provided through staff development for teachers and other school personnel.

Opportunities will be provided to parents at parent meetings to learn about the following:

- the components of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001,
- the requirements and components of the school's Title I plan (school-wide or targeted assistance),
- the definition and requirements for making Adequate Yearly Progress by the school,
- opportunities for public school choice or supplemental services (if applicable).

The Clarke County School District will conduct other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child, and that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children. The Clarke County School District will provide any other reasonable support for Family Engagement and Equity requested by parents.

*E. Transportation and Childcare for Family Engagement and Equity in Title I funded schools*

Each school funded by Title I will pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with Family Engagement and Equity activities, including transportation and child care costs, to enable parents to participate in school-related meetings and training sessions. Schools will also hold in-home conferences when families are unable to attend school conferences.

*F. Parent Comments on LEA Plan from Title I funded schools*

The Clarke County School District will collect all unsatisfactory parent comments regarding the LEA Family Engagement and Equity Plan under Section 1112 and will submit these comments to the SEA if necessary. Before the submission of any school-level required Title I plan, policy, or initiative, all parents will be informed of the school's efforts and will be given an opportunity to provide feedback. All input provided by parents must be considered by the school before any change effort is undertaken.

*G. School-Family Compact/Agreement for Title I funded schools*

Each school funded with Title I funds will jointly develop, with the parents of the children served with Title I funds, a school-parent compact/agreement will be developed as a component of this Family Engagement and Equity policy. See Appendix A for an example of a School-Family Compact/Agreements for elementary and middle schools. Annual report cards, individual student assessments, and progress reports will also be made available to all parents.

*H. Family Engagement and Equity Activities for Private School Families*

If private school children receive Title I funds, Family Engagement and Equity funding and activities will be provided to those students and their parents.

*I. Annual Evaluation of Family Engagement and Equity in Title I funded schools*

The Clarke County School District will conduct an annual evaluation of the Family Engagement and Equity policy, plan, and programs in the spring. The purpose of this evaluation will be to determine the effectiveness of each school's family engagement policy in increasing the participation of parents and to identify barriers to greater participation by parents. Particular attention will be given to parents who are economically disadvantaged, disabled, have limited English proficiency, are of any racial or ethnic minority, or who have limited literacy. Results of this annual evaluation will be communicated to all parents in the school. The results of each school's annual evaluation will be used to design strategies for school improvement and to revise, if necessary, the school and/or LEA's Family Engagement and Equity policy.

Each school's policy will be available for parent review upon request and will be updated and reviewed as needed. A copy must be submitted to the Office of Student Achievement and Educational Equity for monitoring by state officials. If the school's plan is not satisfactory to parents of participating children, the school will submit any parent comments with the school's plan. Parental comments (if applicable) will be kept on file at the school and in the Office of Student Achievement and Educational Equity. Schools will complete a Self Assessment, an evaluation of their SIFs, a determination of what standards they have followed, and determine the barriers that continue to keep families from becoming engaged in the schools.

*J. Involvement of Parents and Community in the process of School Review and Improvement*

- School Review and Improvement – CCSD will continue to encourage SFEATs, which consists of parents, community members, teachers, principals, and students when possible, to closely follow their state-mandated responsibility of:
  - Development and approval of school improvement frameworks;
  - Monitoring school improvement frameworks; and
  - Sharing and informing other parents and community members of the progress or lack of progress of the school improvement plans.
  - The results of the annual school review for determining adequate yearly progress will be communicated to all parents, teacher, principals, and the community at large. A part of this annual school review will assess the effectiveness of the Family Engagement and Equity activities, not by the increase or decrease in numbers of parents involved, but by the impact of the activities on student achievement (section 1116).
- ✓ Needs Improvement If the school does not show achievement gains (make adequate yearly progress) for two consecutive years, it will be placed in school improvement as required by the law. When a school is identified for school improvement, an extensive process of review and evaluation of the instructional program will be made. A team of teachers, administrators, consultants, district staff, and parents will be assembled to study the school's current school improvement plan to find ways to improve it. A full representation of parents will be included in this process of looking for strategies to better serve their children and raise the level of academic achievement in the school. Parents' input will be sought to help discover why the program as designed at that school is not being successful. With the help of research, a revised instructional program will be designed to better meet the needs of the particular school's population. The resulting school improvement plan will be shared with parents before submission to the district office for peer review as required by the law.
- ✓ Public School Choice - Not later than the first day of school following its identification for school improvement, parents of all students enrolled in the school will be notified by the district that they have the right to transfer their child(ren) to another, higher-performing school. Notification will consist of flyers, official mailings, Internet, posters, etc. Public school choice will continue to be offered to parents until the school is no longer identified for school improvement.
- ✓ Supplemental Services - If, after one year following the implementation of the school improvement plan, the school does not make adequate yearly progress, parents of all eligible students in the school will be offered the opportunity to request supplemental services for their children. Parents will be notified by the district not later than the first day of school following its failure to make adequate yearly progress. Supplemental services will continue to be offered to parents of eligible students until the school is no longer identified for school improvement.
- ✓ Corrective Action If, after a second year following its identification for school improvement, a school does not make adequate yearly progress, it



will be placed in corrective action as required by the law. When a school is placed in corrective action, the district will consider one or more corrective actions for the school. Parents will be involved in the determination of any corrective action taken by the district and will be informed of these corrective actions and their impact on their child's continuing education at the school. Both public school choice and supplemental services will continue to be offered during corrective action until the school is no longer identified for school improvement.

- ✓ *Restructuring* If, after a third year following its identification for school improvement, a school does not make adequate yearly progress, it will be placed in restructuring as required by the law. When a school is placed in restructuring, the district will begin a year-long process of redesigning the school to open the subsequent year under an alternative governance structure. Parents will be involved throughout this process and will be informed of alternative governance selected for their child's school and its impact on their child's continuing education at the school. Both public school choice and supplemental services will continue to be offered during restructuring and alternative governance until the school is no longer identified for school improvement.

#### *K. Written and Oral Communication with Parents*

The Clarke County School District will ensure that all information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities will meet this requirement. This includes:

- simple and clear written communication in parent-friendly language,
- clear and simple explanations of educational terms used by teachers and other school personnel,
- use of a variety of formats to communicate (both face-to-face as well as written),
- translation of written information into all languages which are represented to a significant degree in the school,
- use of interpreters at all school functions, if a significant proportion of parents are represented in attendance.